(c) Yes, Sir. The National Housing Bank is the apex-level Housing Finance Institution and performs the coordinating role in the housing finance sector by overseeing the activities of the housing finance companies in the country. The Nodal Cell has, therefore, been set up in the Bank.

(d) In line with the general policy for encouraging NRI investment in various sectors of the economy, Government of India have formulated the scheme to attract large-scale NRI investment in the housing and real estate sector, keeping in view the requirements of NRIs.

Statement

Board details of scheme for NRI investment in Housing and real estate development.

The scheme will cover investment by NRIs with foreign citizenship and Indian passports in housing and real estate ventures, housing finance institutions, building material units, etc. in terms of existing investment guidelines. It will also make it easier and attractive for intending NRIs in various countries to acquire, rent and gift property and reside in housing colonies in different cities so long as they make payments in foreign exchange. They can repatriate original investment after minimum initial lock-in period of three years. Repatriation of income and dividend after taxation in respect of manufacture of building materials, participatory ventures in real estate and in housing finance institutions has been permitted.

A Nodal Cell has been set up in National Housing Bank for coordinating decisions on policies and procedures relating to NRI investment with representation of all concerned agencies. This will be supervised by the Ministry of Urban Development.

On the strength of the approved status of builders, necessary clearances in respect of the builder's project will be given for the construction and provision of services at the local level by State and city agencies.

Upto 5 per cent of sale proceeds in each scheme, subject to a ceiling of Rs. 25 lakhs, exclusive of the foreign exchange for travel and advertisement, will be released, in foreign exchange, to the builders towards expenses for marketing the houses, including payment of commissions and promotion of schemes on an international basis.

Non-Resident Indians are also permitted to acquire, hold, transfer or dispose of properties by way of sale or inheritance, provided, where properties are acquired by purchases, they are for bonafide residential purpose of the purchasers and the sale consideration is met out of foreign exchange. They will also be permitted to let out the properties on rent.

Gifting of properties by NRIs to relatives will be freely permitted, subject to taxation, without the requirements of prior permission. NRIs can acquire upto two houses provided the purchase is affected with foreign exchange.

The required permission for purchase of the house under Sect. 269 UG of Income Tax Act will be given by the Income Tax Deptt. within 15 to 30 days.

Netaji Subhash National Institute of Sports, Patiala

*353. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that costly modern and sophisticated equipments are lying idle at the Netaji Subhash National Institute of Sports at Patiala;

(b) if so, the details of the equipments lying idle at the Institute; since when unutilised and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there are frequent squabbles between coaches and scientists of the Institute which affect the performance of the Sports persons; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps Government have already taken or propose to take to create a calm and conducive atmosphere at the Institute ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Most of the equipments are being put to optimum use. Only the following equipments, being old and out-dated have gone out of order and have remained idle :

(i) Ergopneumotest for Oxygen and Carbon dioxide analysis manufactured by M/s. Erich Jeager, Germany;

(ii) Film Motion Analyzer for analysis of the movement of various parts of body manufactured by M/s International Marketing Co., U.K.;

(iii) Sports Tester watches manufactured by Polar Electronics, Holland,

(iv) Lactate Analyzer, manufactured by M/s. Yellow Spring(USA; and

(v) Diapulse and Thermotrone.

(c) No. Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Declaration of Mega Cities

*354. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA-ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) what were the concepts and norms for declaring a city as a 'Mega City';

(b) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration for declaring some cities in the country as 'Mega Cities';

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how Government propose to make funds available for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SMT. SHEILA KAUL) : (a) to (d). The Government of India to not declare any cities as Mega cities. Taking into consideraion the present population, urban growth rate and contribution by the bigger metropolitan, viz. Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore and Hyderabad, the Plnning Commission has proposed to introduce a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for infrastructure development in these cities. Proposals received from the State Governments of Maharashtra, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in respect of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Hyderabad respectively have been recommended to the Planning Commission.

Discussions have been held with the States Governments by the Planning Commission. No final decision has been arrived at regarding size of projects to be taken up in each of these cities and the pattern of funding.

Reclaiming of land in the Yamuna River Bed

*355. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Delhi Development Auhority plans to reclaim thousands of hectares of land in the Yamuna River bed: and

(b) if so, what are the details of schemes indicating the purpose for which the reclaimed land would be utilised?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SMT. SHEILA KAUL): (a) and (b) While a comprehensive project for reclamation of Yamuna River Bed has not yet been taken up by DDA, preliminary feasibility reports